

App. No. 09/846,866

In the Claims:

1-25 (cancelled)

26. (new) A system for monitoring and controlling a plurality of appliances, said system comprising:

access means providing said appliances with internet connectivity; and

at least one central server located on the internet, through which all data from said appliances and users of said system passes;

wherein said system is capable of allowing any said user to simultaneously communicate with a plurality of said appliances in real-time;

wherein said appliance contains an embedded internet access means built-in as an integral part of said appliance;

capable of allowing a plurality of said users to simultaneously communicate with any particular said appliance in real-time;

capable of allowing any said appliance to communicate with a plurality of other said appliances simultaneously and in real-time; and

wherein said appliances automatically logon to said central server at regular pre-programmed intervals to report their status.

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27. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 26, wherein said central server is capable of receiving inputs from and transmitting outputs to said appliances under the control of a plurality of program control means.

28. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 26, wherein said central server contains software application means for a plurality of users of said system to write and modify said program control means and the writing and modification of said program control means is done through a graphical user interface (GUI).

29. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 26, wherein said appliances automatically connect to the internet and said central server using a dial-up connection when one or more changes in state is detected in said appliance, and to disconnect therefrom after a programmable interval of inactivity.

30. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 26, further comprising means:

to send out alerts to said users;

to communicate with any other internet enabled device using XML; and

to encrypt and decrypt communication between said central server and said appliances.

31. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 26, wherein said appliance is capable of receiving a request from said central server while said appliance is offline, thereafter responding to said request by initiating a connection to said central server.

32. (new) An embedded internet access device using the system in claim 26.

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33. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 26, wherein said appliance connects to said central server using said unique identification means and a password in combination.

34. (new) An embedded internet device as in claim 26, wherein communication between said appliance and said central server is encrypted.

35. (new) A system for monitoring and controlling a plurality of appliances, said system comprising:

access means providing said appliances with internet connectivity; and

at least one central server located on the internet, through which all data from said appliances and users of said system passes;

wherein said system is capable of allowing any said user to simultaneously communicate with a plurality of said appliances in real-time;

wherein said appliance contains an embedded internet access means built-in as an integral part of said appliance;

capable of allowing a plurality of said users to simultaneously communicate with any particular said appliance in real-time;

capable of allowing any said appliance to communicate with a plurality of other said appliances simultaneously and in real-time;

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wherein said appliances automatically logon to said central server at regular pre-programmed intervals to report their status:

wherein said appliance connects to said central server using said unique identification means and a password in combination; and

wherein communication between said appliance and said central server is encrypted.

36. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 35, wherein said central server is capable of receiving inputs from and transmitting outputs to said appliances under the control of a plurality of program control means.

37. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 35, wherein said central server contains software application means for a plurality of users of said system to write and modify said program control means and the writing and modification of said program control means is done through a graphical user interface (GUI).

38. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 35, wherein said appliances automatically connect to the internet and said central server using a dial-up connection when one or more changes in state is detected in said appliance, and to disconnect therefrom after a programmable interval of inactivity.

39. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 35, further comprising means:

to send out alerts to said users;

to communicate with any other internet enabled device using XML; and

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to encrypt and decrypt communication between said central server and said appliances.

40. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 35, wherein said appliance is capable of receiving a request from said central server while said appliance is offline, thereafter responding to said request by initiating a connection to said central server.

41. (new) An embedded internet access device using the system in claim 35.

42. (new) A system for monitoring and controlling a plurality of appliances, said system comprising:

access means providing said appliances with internet connectivity; and

at least one central server located on the internet, through which all data from said appliances and users of said system passes wherin said central server contains software application means for a plurality of users of said system to write and modify said program control means and the writing and modification of said program control means is done through a graphical user interface (GUI;

wherin said system is capable of allowing any said user to simultaneously communicate with a plurality of said appliances in real-time;

wherin said appliance contains an embedded internet access means built-in as an integral part of said appliance;

capable of allowing a plurality of said users to simultaneously communicate with any particular said appliance in real-time;

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capable of allowing any said appliance to communicate with a plurality of other said appliances simultaneously and in real-time; and

wherein said appliances automatically logon to said central server at regular pre-programmed intervals to report their status.

43. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 42, wherein said central server is capable of receiving inputs from and transmitting outputs to said appliances under the control of a plurality of program control means.

44. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 42, wherein said appliances automatically connect to the internet and said central server using a dial-up connection when one or more changes in state is detected in said appliance, and to disconnect therefrom after a programmable interval of inactivity.

45. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 42, further comprising means:

to send out alerts to said users;

to communicate with any other internet enabled device using XML; and

to encrypt and decrypt communication between said central server and said appliances.

46. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 42, wherein said appliance is capable of receiving a request from said central server while said appliance is offline, thereafter responding to said request by initiating a connection to said central server.

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47. (new) An embedded internet access device using the system in claim 42.

48. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 42, wherein said appliance connects to said central server using said unique identification means and a password in combination.

49. (new) An embedded internet device as in claim 42, wherein communication between said appliance and said central server is encrypted.

50. (new) A monitoring and control system of claim 26, wherein said appliance contains an embedded internet access means built-in as an integral part of said appliance.